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INFO RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBE/AMEMBASSY BELMOPAN 0034  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0609  
RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 2019  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0402  
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL  
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL//SCJ2-JIC-IRD/OPSD//  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 0040

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 002244

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DEPT PLS PASS TO USAID FOR LAC/CAM - K. SIENKIEWICZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/16/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [GT](#)

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER-DESIGNATE MEETS WITH AMBASSADOR,  
WHA/CEN DIRECTOR

Classified By: Ambassador James M. Derham for reasons 1.4 (b&d).

¶1. (C) Guatemalan Foreign Minister-Designate Haroldo Rodas met November 13 with Ambassador, visiting WHA/CEN Director Feeley, and Pol/Econ Couns. We discussed with Rodas the USG's request to Congress for \$50 million to buttress Central American regional security. Rodas conveyed his appreciation and support for the initiative, and discussed the rule of law challenges that confront Guatemala and the region.

¶2. (C) Rodas defined himself as a center-left, Social Democrat along the lines of Chilean President Bachelet. He stated that the Colom Government would be of the domestic center-left, and would not be influenced by populist Latin American leftists such as Chavez. Rodas, having just returned from the Iberoamerican Summit in Santiago, Chile, said he, Colom, and President Berger had been appalled by Chavez's comportment at the Summit.

¶3. (C) Rodas lauded CAFTA-DR, saying it had also helped to make trade among Central American countries freer, and reiterated the Colom Government's commitment to free trade in general. Furthering Central American integration would be a top priority for the new government, he said. So too would be maintaining good relations would the United States, Guatemala's top trading partner. Advocating for migrants' rights would figure prominently in the bilateral agenda. Rodas conveyed Colom's thanks to the Ambassador for President Bush's November 13 congratulatory phone call, and said Colom hoped to visit the White House sometime after his January 14 inauguration.

¶4. (C) Rodas was sharply critical of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega. Regarding Guatemala's current, diplomatic relations with Taiwan, Rodas said he anticipated no changes. On Belize, Rodas said he favors holding a national referendum required to obtain popular approval for submitting the Belize border dispute to international arbitration. Once in arbitration, he said, the Colom Government would respect any ruling made by the International Court of Justice.

¶5. (C) Comment and Bio Note: Rodas came across as diplomatic, seasoned, friendly, and capable. Most recently, Rodas worked as the Trade Policy Director for SIECA (System for Central American Economic Integration). He was Vice

Foreign Minister during 1991-1992. Rodas worked for the OAS as a Senior Specialist in International Commerce, during which time he lived in the Washington, D.C. area. He was also Regional Director in Charge of Development Assistance for Central American Integration at the IDB, and worked at the UNDP as an International Expert. Rodas is not a member of Colom's party, the UNE, but was a member of Guatemala's Democratic Socialist Party in the 1970's and 1980's. Rodas is reportedly fluent in French and English. He is a graduate of Guatemala's San Carlos University and has a Master's Degree in International Economics from the University of Geneva, Switzerland. Rodas was born on May 29, 1946.

16. (U) This message was cleared by WHA/CEN Director Feeley.  
Derham